



Interesting Case from our web site www.fairfield-vets.co.uk



"Bruno" labrador with hip problem



When Mr Burnham saw Bruno slip in the garden he was surprised at how lame he became after such an innocuous incident. Concerned by his lack of improvement he brought Bruno to see me the following day.

From my clinical examination it became clear that Bruno's problem was with his hip. Manipulation of this joint elicited a consistent pain response and given the severity of his lameness he was admitted for x-rays.

Whilst Bruno was a Labrador, a breed well documented with hip dysplasia, even I was astonished at the severity of arthritic changes to be seen on the x-ray film. My surprise was compounded by the fact that at almost 6 years of age he had never demonstrated any known symptoms previously.

Earlier in his life, upon my recommendation, Bruno had lost 20lb bodyweight which his owner had then strictly maintained at his current weight of 64lb. Whilst his weight has almost certainly allowed him to cope better with his joint problems it is still very hard to explain fully how a patient can appear so well yet have such dramatic radiographic changes. This anomaly explains why I base my surgical decisions on what the patient "tells" me rather than what appears on the x-ray.

Fortunately, after a short course of medication Bruno's problem "disappeared". A year later the only clue that Bruno gives to his condition is the peculiar "bunny hopping" manner when he runs. This action causes his spine to flex and extend rather than his hip joints which have become thickened and restricted.

Hip disease is very common in certain breeds of dog. The situation being that if you own a Clumber Spaniel or an Otterhound it is not a question of whether your pet has hip dysplasia but more a question of how severe!

I am assured by Bruno's owners that he doesn't receive any "magic potions" or "special supplements" to allow him to cope so admirably which is a pity, for after another "successful" Burns night at the Watergate restaurant I could do with one myself! We will therefore have to conclude that Bruno's success is down to his own stoicism and enthusiastic temperament. If only that came in a tablet!

Terry Dunne BVMS, Cert SAO, MRCVS

This X-ray shows how normal hips should look. Note the precise match between the ball and the socket.



This shows dysplastic hips. Note how the ball no longer matches the socket accurately. Every time the joint moves the load acts at particular points instead of being spread evenly.



This shows osteoarthritic hips. The protrusions marked by the arrows are new bone created as a reaction to the loads put on the hips by the poor fit between the ball and socket. Much the same way as new bone grows to mend a break.



This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care